

New treatment program to help end meth demand

By Brian Sargent Staff Writer

Jean DuBois said she fell in love with methamphetamine the first time she used it.

"I could work. I could take care of my kids. It gave me a lot of energy. It took away any pain I was feeling. It didn't matter if it was emotional pain, physical pain. It was gone," said DuBois.

Now a recovering meth addict, DuBois said recovery from the powerfully addictive central nervous system stimulant is possible with the help of treatment programs. A newly created program, which, if successful, will help lower the number of meth addicts needing treatment.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America Methamphetamine Demand Reduction Program was announced Tuesday at Eagle Ridge Institute, an Oklahoma City alcohol and drug treatment center.

Television, radio and newspaper advertisements could reach Oklahoma within two weeks, said Mike Townsend, Partnership for a Drug-Free America executive vice president.

The program's ultimate goal is increasing risk awareness and decreasing trial and use, said Townsend.

The program is funded by a \$2 million federal grant U.S. Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Warr Acres, helped secure. He attended Tuesday's announcement.

"Typically, when we've talked about methamphetamine, we've talked about the law enforcement side and what it takes to detect and shut down and prevent drug labs from being formed in the first place," said Istook. "Today, we're not talking about drying up the supply, we're talking about drying up the demand. Oklahoma needs this effort. We have not had enough of a publicity effort to tell people how destructive this is ... and how it can ruin lives."

DuBois doesn't know if an anti-meth campaign would have prevented her from using it.

"I did not start learning about what my methamphetamine addiction did to me until I got clean," she said.

DuBois now works at Eagle Ridge Family Treatment Center in Guthrie.

"I don't live my life by the guise that I may die tomorrow because of all the chemicals I put in my body, but it gives me pause," said Du-Bois. "It makes me wonder what I did to my heart, what I did to my lungs, what I did to my kidneys."